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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments: Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe - Atoma Area Project

Dear Supervisor William A. Dunkelberger,

I'm writing you to express my comments about the proposed Mt. Rose Ski Area development plan, Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe - Atoma Area EIS.

In general, I support Alternative 1, the No-Action alternative. I would agree that the Atoma area should be kept free of commercial development, including a ski area, chair lifts, and ski runs. Definitely preserve this area for non-motorized, dispersed, backcountry recreation! As a backcountry skier and frequent user of the Galena drainage and surrounding areas, I would prefer that these areas remain as untouched and tranquil as possible. This view is also consistent with the current rules restricting the use of snowmobiles in the area.

Also as a downhill skier who has skied at Mt. Rose ski area many times, I am hard pressed to understand why the ski area would need to expand north of the highway just to support intermediate and beginner skiers. It seems like there's already enough of that terrain accessed off of the Pondelena lift at the ski area. Are skier numbers increasing so that this facility is overwhelmed? Ski resort trends seem to indicate otherwise. The proposal is for a quad chair lift - this portends a heavy use profile which could be undesirable for this more fragile area. It also seems as though the trail widths of 40 to 70 feet are a bit incongruous to serving beginner and intermediate skiers, who generally need more open area to make turns in.

With regard to the other alternatives, if the development is approved, I definitely support the multiple shared use with backcountry skiers and snowshoers. This would include permanent protection for the 3,446 acres north of the highway and continued free public access to the Atoma area (including those accompanied by dogs). The backcountry users (non-paying public) should be granted designated uphill and downhill routes for the continued public access to forest service land being operated as part of a Special Use Permit, and public access to any restrooms on public land.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eric Valentino

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